



VALOR

Avail Academy Newsletter

Voice

Spring 2023



WHAT WE BELIEVE

Mission: Avail Academy provides quality education that is fully integrated with a biblical knowledge of God and his world, supporting Christian parents and the church in nurturing children as disciples of Christ.

Vision: Avail Academy will thrive as a provider of distinctively Christian elementary and secondary education and will lead the larger community to adopt Christian education as a priority.

Values: Cultural Connectedness, Thoughtful Discipleship, Nurturing Community, Transforming Education, Opening Opportunities

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Dear Valor Community,

I am both humbled and excited to begin my position as Principal at the Edina campus of Avail this July. I genuinely appreciate all the well wishes I have received from students, staff, families, and other supporters of Avail. The legacy of Mr. Groen's Godly leadership is remarkable and has enabled our campus community to be ready for this time of transition.

The students at Avail continue to impress me with not only their deep commitment to academics, but their musical, and artistic abilities as well. It has been fantastic to see so many Avail students compete in local, state and national competitions where their strong academic skills are showcased. The high caliber of the arts has been on display recently too. The entire school came together and sang at the Grandparents Day assembly, musicals, fine arts nights, and a performance at Valleyfair!

I am excited about the staff that we have and their dedication to Christ-centered education. The creative ideas and opportunities each teacher and staff member provides for the students to learn has been incredible to witness this year. Our hallways are filled with dynamic artwork, words of encouragement, along with educational displays that have been created by the students, under the direction of our amazing staff.

The support from the families at Avail is outstanding. Not a day goes by that you do not see parents in the building volunteering in various ways. The spirit of camaraderie and supporting the school is strong no matter if it's coaching a team, organizing a fundraiser, or providing classroom support. Getting to know each family is my goal, and I look forward to opportunities where we can get to know one another in the months to come.

In Him,
Kristin Hatton

Kristin Hatton

Current 4th Grade Teacher
Edina Campus Principal beginning August 2023



HIGH SCHOOL – FRIDLEY CAMPUS

Model United Nations Conference: Political science students engaged in the Model UN Conference this spring. Students could either attend an in-person or virtual simulation. The conference allowed students to participate in simulations, representing a specific country's viewpoint in a larger discussion of current global issues and possible solutions.



Spring Musical: The Avail Academy High School Spring Musical *Tuck Everlasting* entertained theater-goers of all ages with humor and a thought-provoking message about the gift of life and death. Congratulations to the cast, crew, and directors Jonathan Grommesh and Summer Janssen on creating a show that was a smashing success!



COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Solar Suitcases: The 10th graders at Avail Academy High School were working alongside Mr. Vande Glind and Mrs. Mast to help those in need of electricity across the world, through an organization called We Share Solar (Solar Suitcase). Simply put, we were assembling a solar panel circuit kit that will be sent to a place of need.

When asked the question, "Why do you think this project is important?" Janae Krueger said: *"I think incorporating our knowledge and using our learning in the real world is so important. It is bringing it out of the classroom to a place that needs it. Sharing our knowledge is essential. We must use it to make something, do something, take what we have learned about God's world and use it in God's world, for God's people."*

In previous years, the solar kits have been sent across the world to a refugee camp in Uganda to provide electricity for their local school. This kit is supplied with solar panels and a battery which stores between 84 to 120 watt-hours. To put this into perspective, the kit has the ability to power a three room schoolhouse, as well as charging some cellphones on the side. Our hope for this project is that as a class, we were able to provide reliable electricity for those who don't have it readily available.





COMMUNITY BAND CONCERT

One of my deep hopes for band students at Avail Academy is to enjoy music as a gift from God all the days of their lives. One way of enjoying this gift is making music with others. Music making with others outside of our normal community gives us opportunities for understanding other cultures and communities. As a member of the Centennial Community Band I have made friends with people of different backgrounds. One such friend in that band teaches at Hmong College Prep Academy and we talked about the idea of getting our students, along with the Centennial Community Band together for a performance. Before we went to HCPA to rehearse we all had questions about the culture there and how we could connect. We discovered playing music together crosses bridges of culture! We not only joined our school-aged peers but also collaborated with the adults from all walks of life in the CCB.

By Susan Schevenius, 5-12 Instrumental Music

Students Curate Art Exhibit:

Junior and senior students in the Senior and Studio Art Classes designed the Avail 1st-12th Grade Art Exhibit at the Northtown Library. They put their design skills to work to create a display that is visually pleasing and engaging for the greater community to see.



HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETICS

Girls Basketball Academic Team Champions:

The Valor Girls Varsity Basketball team has won the Academic Team Champion Award for Class A with a GPA of 3.99.



Winning Season for Boys Basketball: The Valor

Boys Varsity Basketball team finished a strong season with a 20-8 record. They are also the Academic Team Champions for Section 4A.



ELEMENTARY – BLAINE CAMPUS

Youth Day at the Capital: 7th grade students took a field trip and participate in Youth Day at the Capitol (YDAC). Some of the activities included advocacy training, meeting with State Legislators, marching to the Capitol, touring the History Center, and meeting Governor Tim Walz and Secretary of State Steve Simon.



Disc Golf Tournament Series: The Blaine campus hosted the first official disc golf tournament, Avail Spring Fling, on Saturday, May 13. Nathan Brewer, Eli Eyberg, and Ben Mast each won their age division.

Middle School Musical: The Blaine Campus Middle Schoolers presented the musical *Newsies Jr.* It was a wonderful performance! Thank you to the Directors: Maygann McCarthy-Vogel, Amanda Kubacki Postma and Marta Smith and all the volunteers.

Girls Basketball: Congratulations to our girls basketball teams. The B-squad team grew significantly in their skills throughout the season. The Varsity competed in the North Suburban Parochial School League (NSPSL) Conference Tournament and placed third.



Math Masters: The Fifth Grade Math Masters Teams placed fourth and seventh in the team competition of Math Masters. Members included: Henry Bruin, Micah Brockmeier, Calvin Collines, Natania Dereje, Roman Martin Makarych, Jonathan Schoonveld, Sam Schussman, and Kate VandeGlind. Henry Bruin and Kate VandeGlind placed fourth and sixth overall as individuals.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Cloverleaf Buddies: 5th grade students visited with residents from Cloverleaf Courts Senior Community throughout the school year. The students built a relationship with their buddy by playing games, interviewing, snacking, and enjoying other learning activities.

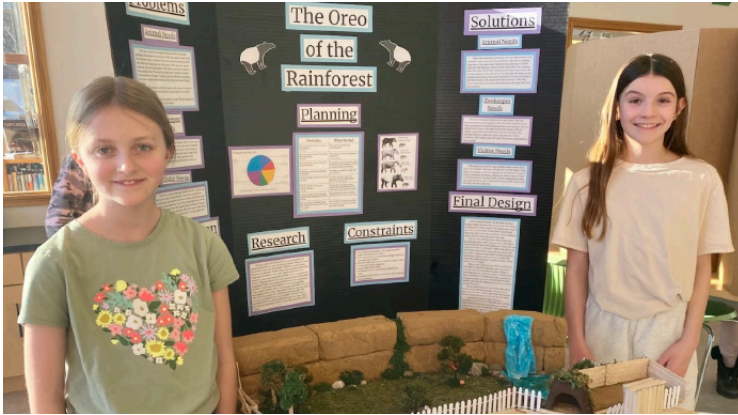


Bubbling Over Needs Drive: Kindergarten and eighth grade students partnered together to complete a successful needs drive, delivering more than 965 lbs of donated items to the Salvation Army. Students learned how to love their neighbors by giving needed items to share love with the surrounding community. A special thanks to Great Northern Corporation in Brooklyn Park, MN for their donation of a pallet of toothpaste!



ELEMENTARY – EDINA CAMPUS

Zoo Project: Fifth graders, Mira Byers and Evangeline Leeper, were awarded second place in the ZOOMS STEM Design Challenge. The winners were selected based on their outstanding project presentations and use of the engineering design process. They presented their project about the Malayan Tapir to a panel of judges and placed second out of over 40 elementary teams from across the state of Minnesota!



Math Masters: The Fifth Grade Math Masters Team competed in a math competition that challenges students to use critical thinking and problem solving skills in mathematics. Members of the team included Joel Abbring, Miles Beckeing, Simon Bosch, Ariel Dammann, and Charlie Engebretson. They finished in eighth place among the 36 schools that competed at the Lakeville site. Joel Abbring placed fourth in the Math Fact Drill and 17th in the individual competition.



Middle School Musical: The middle school performed the musical *Annie Jr.* Thanks to Hannah Vanderhooft (Director), Kathleen Beekman (Music), Kari Zylstra, and many other volunteers who helped make this performance possible! The students did an incredible job of singing, acting, and dancing as they performed this popular Broadway musical.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Seeds for Kenya: As part of the concentrated study of Kenya, students learned Kenyan farmers need soybean seeds. Soybean seeds are important because Kenyan parents soak and boil them in water to supplement their child's diet. Soy milk provides children with essential nutrients for good health and proper growth. Our students, who were encouraged to take on extra chores and tasks to help raise money for this cause, raised over \$1,100 for this project. The seed money will be sent to Kenya through an organization called World Renew.

Modern Day Missionaries: The eighth grade Bible Class studied Paul's Missionary Journeys as recorded in the Book of Acts. They have been amazed at the blessings, challenges, and hardships that Paul endured as he spread the gospel. In order to find out more about modern day missionaries, the students sent letters to various missionaries around the world. They asked what led them to become missionaries and about the blessings and challenges they face on the mission field. The students received responses from seventeen missionaries currently serving on six different continents. These missionaries also shared their prayer needs with the students and the eighth grade students spent time praying for each of the missionaries.





HISTORY DAY REFLECTIONS

On April 22, eight students from the Avail 8th Grade classes participated in the State History Day Competition. They began in September, choosing topics related to this year's theme: Frontiers in History: People, Places, Ideas. The steps they followed over the next eighth months echoed efforts by students nationwide for the 49 years this program has been in existence.

The National History Day Competition takes place in Maryland in June every year, celebrating high scholarship and providing an opportunity for students to pursue historical research with an intensity that rivals elite athletic competitions.

Our Avail students took this in many directions, with topics of personal interest that also have a high impact on the way we live our lives today. The competition allows choice of product, and our students filled the spectrum from writing a paper, to building an exhibit, to producing a documentary, a website, or a performance.

We do History Day at Avail because it is a chance to pursue real work in the real world, learning from primary sources in history, interpreting and organizing data, drawing conclusions, and supporting a thesis about why

events of the past matter today. Students have the chance to develop their academic skills, support each other, and see how God is at work as they ponder differences in perspective and how people in history have responded to the call to live in truth and grace.

For me, personally, I have gained a new appreciation for all of our students. The most rewarding moments come for me when a student realizes something about themselves that they didn't know before. Sometimes that's in finding they have more grit than they thought, and sometimes that's in learning something deep about the world and their place in it.

And those eight students that made it through the Avail Competition, the Regional Competition, and to State in April? They attended each other's judging sessions, cheered and encouraged each other, and then celebrated when those who made it to the final round. Congratulations students – not just on your achievement, but also on the deep work you have done, the skills you have gained, and the grace you have shared in supporting each other!

By Julie Amen, 8th grade Language Arts Teacher

Minnesota State History Day Honors

Several eighth graders presented their projects at the Minnesota State History Day competition. First through fifth place awards are given by the state of Minnesota. Avail Academy students received the following awards.

1st Place Performance: Emilyn Bosch, *"Hedy Lamarr: Developing the Frontier of Electrical Engineering and the Status of Women as Inventors"* – National Qualifier

2nd Place Research Paper: Josie Dederichs, *"Penicillin: Revolutionizing the Medical Field"* – National Qualifier

4th Place Documentary: Henry Kimmel, *"Bakken and Lillehei: Transforming the Frontier of Biomedical Engineering"* – MN Experience Documentary Prize

5th Place Documentary: Elise Miles, *"Lewis Hine's Documentary Photography: Helping Abolish Child Labor in the Early 1900s"* – Labor History Prize

5th Place Performance: Katherine Zylstra, *The Jazz Singer: Developing the Frontier of Sound in Movie"*

Honorable Mention Paper: Sadie Vietzen, *"The Consent of the Governed: A New Frontier for Freedom"*

Honorable Mention Exhibit: Scarlett Moreton, *"Alice Coachman: A Golden Frontier in Sports for African American's"*
State Qualifying Website: Carsten Bruin *"Navajo Code Talkers: A Frontier in Creating an Unbreakable Code"*

CAMPUS CONNECTIONS

Honors Band: On Saturday, April 22nd, the 5th and 6th grade students from Blaine & Edina campuses participated in the CMBDA Honor Bands at Mora High School. Thanks to Avail Band Director, Susan Schevenius, for making this opportunity possible for the students.

Band and Choir Concerts: The Blaine and Edina middle school students traveled to the Fridley campus to rehearse and then perform a joint concert with the High School in March. It was a wonderful opportunity to act as God-Worshippers and Beauty-Creators. The middle school students and the 5th grade band presented their spring concerts at Blaine and Edina campuses. The Blaine and Edina Middle Schools and the High School band classes performed at Valleyfair in May. All three choirs participated in a choice concert in April.

Science Fair Awards: Each year, hundreds of middle students from across Minnesota present original research to STEM professionals and compete for prestigious awards. These student were invited to the State of Minnesota Science Fair: Olivia Byers, Sadie Hall, Patrick Grosser, Ethan Hoekman, Evan Koelewyn, Kaelyn Stel, Andon VandeGlind. Evan Koelewyn recieved the Naval Science Award, and Ethan Hoekman was awarded the Beckman Coulter Excellence in Science Award and was invited to participate in the National Thermo Fisher Scientific Junior Innovators Challenge.

Grandparents/Special Friends Day: Blaine and Edina had a wonderful afternoon of celebrations with their grandparents and special friends with over 500 friends participating. We appreciate all who participated in making the day special for the Avail community!

Middle School Track Meet

The Annual Avail Middle School Track Meet was held on April 28th at the Edina Community Center. Students from seven Christian Schools participated in the various running and field events. The track team from the high school helped run the field events. Despite the rain the students persevered and competed at a high level.



Avail Accelerators

THANK YOU TO OUR
BUSINESS PARTNERS FOR
THEIR GENEROUS SUPPORT

PLATINUM LEVEL:

Aaron Hall Attorney
Anduril Partners
Bethel University
Bell Bank Mortgage –
Jake TeWinkle
Christian Brothers
Automotive – Andover
Elevation Wealth Management
Federal Industries
Corporation
Highland Bank
Lettermen Sports
PrinsBank
Priority Medical Billing
Veil & Wild Orthodontics
Veritage Law Group

GOLD LEVEL:

Blue Yeti – HVAC and
Plumbing Services
Frontier Fire, LLC
National Christian Foundation
University of Northwestern

SILVER LEVEL:

Dale Carnegie
Plantscape, Inc

BRONZE LEVEL:

Four Corners Exploration
Grant Shannon Staffing
The Platinum Group
The Werth Group MN –
Keller Williams Integrity Lakes

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Avail Academy continues to develop its network of business partnerships. If your business would like to partner with us as an Avail Accelerator, please contact Heather Wessman at hwessman@availacademy.org. Please consider making use of one of our business partners' services and thank them for their support of Avail Academy. We value the partnership!

SAVE THE DATE

Valor 5K Challenge: Saturday, October 7,
2023 at 8am at the Lake Harriet Bandshell

Fellowship Dinner: Saturday, November 11,
2023 at 6pm at the Marriott West Banquet Hall